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Synopsis of Important Articles.

The Titles of the Psalms.*—The devotional value of the Psalter is not materially affected by critical questions, yet these latter help to the better understanding of the writer and his times. If dates and authors can be fixed, light will be thrown on the religious life of particular periods in Israelitish history. The titles of one hundred psalms give the author, and, in some cases, the circumstances of composition. (1) The external evidence for these titles is strong. They are more ancient than the Septuagint, and even anterior to the formation of the separate books of the Psalter itself. The evidence is presumptive that they are coeval with the liturgical use of individual psalms, if not with their composition. (2) The internal evidence, when fairly examined in detail, is confirmatory of this conclusion as to their trustworthiness; e. g., (a) Psalm 90 is claimed by the title for Moses, and in favor of this is the historical groundwork in the psalm, and the language often coincident with that of the books of Moses, while objections even such as the representation of human life as shorter than in the Pentateuch are trivial. (b) Psalm 18 was spoken by David according to the title. The books of Samuel corroborate this; the historical groundwork in the psalm itself is suitable to it, and there are no objections worth considering. So it is argued of Psalm 51, verses 18 and 19 of which can be reasonably interpreted on such a basis. Twelve other psalms ascribed to David contain nothing opposed to such an ascription, which finds an adequate justification in the language of these psalms themselves. The objection that the identification is too general is answered by the fact that the Psalmist prefers to dwell on the general features of his situation; this was more congenial to his own pious meditations, and fitted them subsequently for liturgical use. The conclusion is that the high antiquity and external evidence for the titles is corroborated by the internal evidence. They should be accepted as true, except in individual cases, if such exist, where there is clear proof to the contrary. And if David wrote any of the psalms attributed to him, the entire Kuenen-Wellhausen hypothesis of the history of Israel vanishes into smoke.

An argument, with no uncertain sound, in Professor Green's best manner.

The Use of Retaliation in the Mosaic Law.†—Is there, after all, so much of a contrast as has been asserted between the precepts of Jesus (Matt. 5 : 38, 39) and the provisions of the Mosaic law for punishment? (1) Christ himself used force; He contributed to a government of force, and directed His disciples to do so; when He is about to touch the great principle of non-resistance, He warns His hearers that He came not to destroy but to fulfill the Mosaic law of force, which He was about to contrast with precepts of His own. (2) The character

* By Prof. Wm. Henry Green, in *The Methodist Review*, July, 1890, pp. 489-506.

† By Austin Abbott, Esq., in *Christian Thought*, April, 1890, pp. 321-333.

of the patriarchal organization must be kept in mind ; until Moses' time there had been no law but that of retaliation ; Moses himself had thus avenged the injury done to a brother Hebrew. There was no standing army to enforce law ; no national tax by which to make provision for the administration of justice ; no prison-house. The law of retaliation, under all these circumstances, was admirably adapted to secure the ends of justice. There were many crimes for which death or bondage would be too severe. In reference to these Moses said, "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." The custom of retaliation gave a blow for a word, mutilation for a blow. Moses limits this. His law was not a sanction on cruelty, but a restraint on cruelty. There must be justice ; it was not to be the wild justice of revenge, but an equal punishment, measured by the offence, hand for hand, foot for foot, etc. The principles which characterize the Mosaic legislation are : (1) "To maintain the authority of the government by adopting for mutiny, that is to say for idolatry and blasphemy, the punishment of death, just as within each family the father might, by immemorial usage, administer the same punishment against a mutinous son. (2) To mitigate oppression by requiring restitutions with mathematical precision, and putting limited terms of service in place of unlimited servitude. (3) To use the common indignation and retaliation aroused by crimes of violence, as the means of effecting immediate but limited punishment, and thus to awaken in place of revenge a sense of equal justice and public protection."

Something has been done, but remains still to be done in showing the great legal principles which underly the outward form of the Mosaic legislation. This is a most fruitful field of investigation, and one which will bring to others as to the writer of this article a new and fascinating interest in the religious source and the religious bearing of Mosaic law.

The Date of Genesis X.*—The author attempts to show that the genealogical tables in this chapter could have been composed as early as the time of Moses. The evidence brought forward is external : (1) Certain nations are certainly known to have been mentioned before 1300 B. C., viz., Tubal, Cush, Mizraim, Babel, Erech, Shinar, Assur, Nineveh, Sidon, etc. (2) The names of certain nations have probably been identified as names of nations known before 1300 B. C., viz., Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, Lud, Aram, Canaan, etc. (3) The names of nations which can reasonably be supposed to have existed at or before 1300 B. C., viz., Javan, Meshech, Madai, Dodanim, Gomer, Uz, Togarmah, Ashkenaz, Magog, and the sons of Mizraim, Cush and Joktan. (4) The names of late nations prove the early composition, viz., of India, Sinim, Persia, that it was written 550 B. C. ; of Minni, Cutha, Sepharvaim and Carchemish, Ararat, etc., that it was written before 750 B. C. ; of Sobah, Tadmor, Tiphseh, Maachah, Geshur, Nairi, etc., that it was written before 1000 B. C. The writer discusses the different views as to the names as each name is brought up.

A scholarly presentation of material bearing upon a most important phase of the Pentateuchal question,—a presentation, however, which would have been clearer and more satisfactory had authorities and references been more generally indicated in footnotes than in the body of the text.

* By Professor Robert Dick Wilson, Ph. D., in the *Presbyterian and Reformed Review*, April, 1890, pp. 252-281.